



M E D I A R E L E A S E

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH &
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

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TDMHDD to Host National Mental Health Conference

Former U.S. Surgeon General Dr. David Satcher to Speak

Nashville— The Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities will host the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors summer meeting in Nashville July 13-15, 2008. TDMHDD Commissioner Virginia Trotter Betts has served as President of NASMHPD since January, 2008.

"These meetings provide a great opportunity for the mental health leaders from each state to come together and learn from one another through serious and stimulating discussion about our nation's current mental health policies and opportunities," stated Commissioner Virginia Trotter Betts. "One of NASMHPD's goals is to promote better integration of health and mental health care, and Tennessee has several models in our state for this important service. I have invited three mental health professionals from around Tennessee to present their programs and initiatives that focus on integration."

The Tennessee panel on mental health and health care integration will include Dennis Freeman, CEO, Cherokee Health System, Knoxville; Randall Jessee, Sr. VP of Specialty Services, Frontier Health Inc., Gray; and Pastor Diane Young, project director, Emotional Fitness Center Pilot Project, Memphis.

The NASMHPD meeting will also include representatives from the International Initiative of Mental Health Leadership and a major focus will be on effective international mental health policies from their nations. Attendees will also have the opportunity to discuss mental health leadership with Dr. David Satcher, former U.S. Surgeon General, and Dr. Thomas Bornemann, Director of the Carter Center's Mental Health Program in Atlanta.

"I had the unique opportunity to work with both Dr. Satcher and Dr. Bornemann during our posts at HHS in Washington, D.C., and I know their work first-hand as true leaders in mental health policy. I am so delighted they took time out of their busy schedules to come join me in Nashville and be a part of this event," said Commissioner Betts.

NASMHPD serves as the national representative and advocate for state mental health agencies and their directors and supports effective stewardship of state mental health systems. The association informs its members on current and emerging public policy issues, educates on research findings and best practices, provides consultation and technical assistance, collaborates with key stakeholders, and facilitates state to state sharing.

For more information on NASMHPD and the 2008 summer meeting please visit www.nasmhpd.org.

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